

Worksession

Agenda Item #	7
Meeting Date	March 26, 2007
Prepared By	Todd M. Bolton City Arborist
Approved By	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager

Discussion Item	Annual Report on the Urban Forestry Program
Background	The City Arborist prepares a report on activities each year. The Arborist will present his report at the March 26 Council Worksession.
Policy	The City Arborist shall prepare an annual report to the Council.
Fiscal Impact	None
Attachments	Annual Report
Recommendation	None
Special Consideration	

Annual Report to Takoma Park City Council **Urban Forest Program, Calendar Year 2006**

Presented March 26, 2007
Todd M. Bolton, City Arborist

The urban forest program in the City of Takoma Park went through a transition in 2006. The Arborist position was vacant from July through September when Brett Linkletter, the Arborist since 1999, left the City to take a position with Montgomery County. Until a new arborist was hired, the City used a consulting arborist firm to stay current and meet customer needs.

Pathogen Incidents

Previous annual reports have made mention of specific pathogen incidents. For calendar year 2006, no data was kept related to gypsy moths or other incidences of disease or insect activity. None of the trees removed by the City or residents during the last three months of the year showed specific primary pathogenic symptoms. The majority of trees removed under permits were in decline with indications of several problems. This condition is often the result of abiotic incidents or conditions.

Trees on City Property

Several of the City trees removed this year probably died due to construction impacts combined with severe drought during some recent summers. Combined stressors, such as root loss and drought, sometimes cause sudden death or may allow secondary pathogens such as root rots or borers to gain a strong foothold. These secondary pathogens then finish killing the tree. Most of the overstory species trees in Takoma Park have reached maturity and are either declining or simply maintaining a balanced growth condition while adding trunk wood.

During 2006, the City contracted for the removal of 29 street and park trees and contracted to plant 72 trees. Due to the recent arborist position vacancy, only 33 trees were planted. The balance will be planted during the spring of 2007. The City also installed significant landscaping around the new Community Center. Records indicate that over 500 trees were given away during the annual Arbor Day Celebration.

Public Trees	2006	2005	2004	2003
Right of Way Removals	26	47	37	61
Park Removals	3	7	6	9
Natural area removals	0	1	0	0
Other Public property	0	4	0	0
Total Public Space Removals	29	59	43	70

Trees on Private Property

Permits were granted to remove approximately 191 trees during 2006. Of these, 66 permits were granted with the condition that either a replacement tree was to be planted or a tree fund contribution was required. The other 125 permits were granted for removal of dead or hazardous trees, which do not require replacement.

Removals	2006	2005	2004	2003
Applications Received	225	285	197	208
Permits (# of trees)	91	172	153	156
Waivers (# of trees)	153	153	159	132
Denials (# of trees)	21	27	8	13
Emergency waivers (# of trees)	17	22	12	25
Undesirable Species	24			
Total Private Removals	275	357	324	213
Tree Protection Plan Permits	35	32	36	20

Replacement plant requirements were met with 46 tree fund donations and 54 replants.

Overall the tree canopy in Takoma Park is shrinking by a significant amount every year. A rough calculation of canopy removed and replaced (based on the number of trees removed and replanted by private citizens) shows that approximately 1.6 acres of cover was lost, and .0086 acres was replanted. The table above indicates that this is probably a slightly smaller loss than in previous years.

Regarding the number of citizen requests, there are few verifiable statistics from the first nine months of the year; however, the normal work has gone on. If the last third of the year is any indication, the numbers were probably in range with last year. Between October 1 and the end of 2006, the City Arborist has responded to over 110 citizen requests for site visits and tree inspections, and has responded to many other incidental calls with questions or requests for referrals.

Program Development

One of the major projects we will be working on in 2007 is the updating and re-constituting of the Street and Park Tree Inventory. This project was begun in 2006. This data is being converted and linked to the City GIS system. Data reflecting the number and location of information request calls, removal requests, protection plans, and other urban forest activities are now being collected in a format compatible with Arc View databases. This will allow more accurate analysis of canopy loss and replacement, as well as the tracking of insect or disease infestations. This, and other types of data and analysis, will help manage the urban forest more effectively than in the past.